

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JULY 31, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
KENNY
DICKINSON
CONOVER
WOOD
VANSELOW
FRASIER

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS BROCK
SIMPSON
TAYLOR

MICHAEL CONSUELO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Johnson informed she was presenting three requests for printing contracts and she noted the bid opening for all three contracts was on July 24, 2014. She noted each of the selected vendors had met all of the specifications and all three contracts were within the amount budgeted for the project.

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Vanguard Printing, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$47,021 for a term commencing October 3, 2014 and terminating November 14, 2014 to print 210,000 copies of the 2015 Warren County Travel Guide. She noted there had been eight responses to the Request for Proposals (RFP) and informed they would be printing 15,000 fewer copies than last year and the size of the Travel Guide had been reduced by four pages.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Vanguard Printing, LLC as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Fort Orange Press in an amount not to exceed \$2,630 for a term commencing September 26, 2014 and terminating October 31, 2014 to print 3,000 copies of the 2015 Warren County Group Tour Planner. She commented the Group Tour Planner had been revised with a whole new layout and she noted six responses to the RFP had been received.

Motion was made by Mr. Vanselow, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Fort Orange Press as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Vanguard Printing, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$3,667.45 for a term commencing August 26, 2014 and terminating September 30, 2014 to print 60,000 copies of the 2014/2015 Winter Events Brochure. She noted the quantity to be printed was the same as the previous Winter Brochure.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Vanguard Printing, LLC as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested authorization to submit a grant application to Empire State Development for the Matching Funds Grant Program for promotion of tourism on an annual basis without the need for further resolution. She explained the Department applied for this grant program annually and the County Attorney's Office had recommended requesting authorization to submit the application on an annual basis without the need for further resolution.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to authorize the submission of the grant application as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Johnson commented the summer was almost over and local businesses had indicated they had done well. She noted several lodging properties had reported a slow start in July but indicated occupancy had improved by the end of the month. She stated that she had used the Smith Travel Report to compare Fourth of July Weekends for 2013 and 2014. She said there were 20 area lodging properties which subscribed to and sent their data to the Smith Travel Report and she acknowledged the Report was not a complete representation of Warren County lodging properties. She advised there had been a decrease of 1.3% in occupancy for Fourth of July Weekend 2014 versus 2013. She added in 2013 there was a 90.5% occupancy level for Fourth of July Weekend compared to 89.3% for 2014. Ms. Johnson stated there had been an increase in room rates, noting in 2013 the average daily room rate for Fourth of July Weekend had been \$192.38 and for 2014 it had been \$204.69, reflecting an increase of 6.4%. She advised for the previous weekend of July 25-26, 2014, Warren County had experienced a 95.7% occupancy rate and had outperformed Saratoga and Essex Counties. Ms. Johnson informed she had every weekly Smith Travel Report for the last several years if any of the Supervisors wanted to review or compare statistics.

Ms. Johnson commented that representatives from "I ♥ NY" had contacted her a few months prior to inform they would be coming to the area to film new footage for commercials. She noted the Department had assisted them by providing contact information. She pointed out the Department would have the ability to use some of the "I ♥ NY" footage and still photos were displayed for the Committee members which had been obtained from the footage. She noted the "I ♥ NY" film crew had captured some scenic footage including aerial shots of Lake George. She added they had also filmed at The Fort William Henry Resort, the cruise boats and the Sagamore Resort. She mentioned the film crew would return for additional footage and had indicated that a notable celebrity would accompany them to star in one of the "I ♥ NY" commercials.

Ms. Johnson apprised the "I ♥ NY" Campaign had identified key events throughout the State at which they would like to have a presence. She said the Campaign had set up an information table at Americade alongside the Warren County Tourism information table and they planned to continue this for the Warrensburg World's Largest Garage Sale and the Adirondack Balloon Festival. She informed that for the selected events, "I ♥ NY" had produced a New York State Scenic Byways Map for distribution; *a copy of the map is on file with the minutes*. She said "I ♥ NY" had the intent of encouraging travel throughout New York State while at key events.

Ms. Johnson announced the second annual Governor's Adirondack Challenge had been held on July 20, 2014 and images taken during the event were displayed for the Committee members. She noted this was an outdoor recreational event which had taken place in Hamilton County, followed by a reception at Gore Mountain Ski Resort. She added Governor Cuomo and Senator Little had both spoken at the reception about the value of tourism and the great recreational opportunities in Upstate New York. Ms. Johnson informed she had participated in the three mile hike into OK Slip Falls which had been led by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens and Lieutenant Governor Duffy. She commented that Assemblyman Stec had participated in the second group of hikers and an image of him on the hike was displayed for the Committee members. In addition to the three mile hike, she continued, other activities included fishing, motorcycle touring, stand-up paddling and horseshoes. She noted Supervisor Simpson had participated in the golf outing and Supervisor Vanselow had also been present to represent Warren County.

Ms. Johnson said the Department had completed some fall print advertisements and various fall print ads were displayed for the Committee members. She noted placement of most print advertisements included added values, such as banner ads or links on the publication's website. She reminded the Committee members that Warren County was one of the "Epicenters of Experience" in the "New York's Best Experiences" campaign which included a wrapped campaign truck, on which the Warren County Tourism logo was prominent on the driver's side door and an image of the wrapped truck was displayed for the Committee members. She advised the truck and displays were present at various festivals, consumer shows, malls and other tactical locations. She noted she was budgeting funds for 2015 to continue being part of this promotion.

Ms. Johnson stated the 2015 Travel Guide was in production and would be available for distribution in November. She reiterated the size of the Travel Guide had been reduced by four pages and there were 58 advertisers highlighted in it. She displayed the Lake George Fishing & Boating Map to the Committee members and informed a large quantity had been printed; *a copy of the map is on file with the minutes*. She explained the map included aquatic invasive species information but had been printed prior to the initiation of the Lake George Boat Washing and Inspection Program. To correct this, she continued, a sticker for the Program would be placed on the existing copies of the map which would contain the Program logo and website, www.LGBoatInspections.com. She noted when businesses requested copies of the Lake George Fishing & Boating Map, they would be supplied with the stickers to be placed on each map. Ms. Johnson informed a Public Relations Report for the month of July prepared by Joanne Conley, Assistant Tourism Coordinator, was included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Johnson stated she had recently met with the Washington County Tourism Director and a newly appointed member of the Capital Region Economic Development Council to discuss tourism projects and issues. She advised she had attended the China Ready Workshop in Albany on July 21, 2014 hosted by the "I ♥ NY" China Director with over a dozen Chinese Tour Operators and an expert on marketing to the Chinese being present. She noted the entire group traveled from New York City

to Niagara Falls and had made stops in Albany, Utica and Rochester with a Workshop held at each location. She commented the group would make a second visit to see other parts of New York State, as the first visit had been dedicated to larger cities. Ms. Johnson stated Mr. Merlino had mentioned the Adirondack Craft Beverage Trail and Tour at the July 18, 2014 Board Meeting and images of places visited during the tour were displayed for the Committee members.

Lastly, Ms. Johnson announced she was working on the 2015 Departmental Budget Request. She informed the Quarterly Newsletter would be released on August 28, 2014. She announced that Tom Connors, of Ad Workshop, would attend the next Committee Meeting to review the summer and fall television campaigns.

Pertaining to the increase in occupancy tax collections for Warren County, Mr. Merlino advised he had been contacted by a large hotel owner who felt one of the main reasons for the increase in collections was due to many area lodging properties increasing their room rates. Ms. Johnson acknowledged a lot of factors contributed to increases or decreases in occupancy tax collections.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, who distributed copies of her June/July 2014 Group Tour Update to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Brand informed the deadline for inclusion of ads in the 2015 Group Travel Planner had been July 9, 2014. She reported there were a total of 28 advertisers this year including 6 additional businesses, as follows: The Marcella Sembrich Opera Museum; Dunham's Bay Resort; The View Restaurant at Dunham's Bay; The Ramada Inn, Glens Falls; The Queensbury Hotel; and The Shirt Factory Gallery. She explained that individual advertisement space had been reduced from full page ads at a cost of \$250 to quarter page ads at a cost of \$75, thereby reducing the size of the Planner from 38 pages to 25. She noted this had reduced the mailing expense and allowed for a redesign of various sections of the Planner.

Pertaining to the Destinations of New York Travel Show and FAM (familiarization) Tour to be held on September 8-10, 2014, Ms. Brand informed there would be one bus of Tour Operators and seven busses of Group Leaders. She explained the difference by saying the owners of the tour companies were the Tour Operators and their clients were the Group Leaders. She advised the Tour Operators bus would have between 40 and 50 Domestic and International Tour Operators for the three-day FAM Tour. She said she had developed a customized itinerary which she reviewed in detail. The FAM Tour, she continued, would include key sights and attractions in Warren and Saratoga Counties. She advised both the Opening Luncheon and Networking Reception would provide an opportunity for vendors, lodging properties, businesses and attractions to showcase their offerings in a mini-trade show format. She commented that she had requested the Chambers of Commerce to assist in obtaining the involvement of properties in their municipalities. Ms. Johnson interjected that guides had been assigned to the busses and Ms. Brand clarified that step-on guides, escorts and ambassadors had been assigned to each day of the FAM Tour. Ms. Brand announced a customized tote bag with both Warren and Saratoga County logos had been produced for the FAM Tour and would be filled with resource materials.

Ms. Brand informed the seven busses of Group Leaders for the FAM Tour would include pre-qualified Group Leaders from the following tour companies: Covered Wagon; Landmark Tours; Fullington Trailways; Lakefront Lines; Know How Tours/Niagara Scenic; Oneonta Bus; Susquehanna Trailways; and Trolley Tours. She noted each company had been assigned customized itineraries based on their

clients needs. She said the Group Leader itineraries were diverse and included attractions and dining locations throughout Warren and Saratoga Counties. Ms. Johnson stated Ms. Brand had been doing a great job and was putting her heart and soul into the Destinations of New York Travel Show and FAM Tour. Ms. Brand noted any Supervisors who wanted to attend any portion of the FAM Tour should advise her of their interest so she could extend a formal invitation.

Ms. Brand informed that her participation in the Haunted History Trail was ongoing. She explained the "I ♥ NY" Campaign had started the initiative in conjunction with Genesee County. She said the Trail included spooky and family friendly attractions and Warren County's attractions on the Trail included: The Thurman Paranormal Tour; Great Escape's Fright Fest and Zombie Run; The Goblin Gallop; West Mountain's Fall Festival and Haunted Hayrides; The Halloween Pug Parade; and Our Town Theatre Group's production of Dracula. She noted a regional itinerary had been developed and submitted which included haunted attractions in Lake George and the Adirondacks. She mentioned The Fort William Henry Museum's Spirits of History Tour had been on the Haunted History Trail website for some time and an audio component to that attraction would soon be added. Ms. Brand informed a blogger named Lindsay Hawkins had been sent to the area to work the Haunted History Trail and had blogged about her stay at The Fort William Henry Resort, the Spirits of History Tour and a cruise on the Lake George Steamboat Company's Lac du St. Sacrament.

Ms. Brand stated she had attended several shows including the Destinations of New York Sales Exchange in New York City. She advised she had conducted 9-minute appointments with 20 International Receptive Tour Operators. She informed of her participation in a 2-day Destinations of New York State Rhode Island/Connecticut Sales Mission to Tour Operator Offices throughout both states. She said she had conducted 10-minute appointments with 12 Tour Operators on a traveling "sales office on wheels" bus. She advised the primary focus of the appointments had been what's new for 2015 and beyond.

Ms. Brand informed of a meeting with Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), wherein a decision had been made to include a link to The Festival Space at Charles R. Wood Park Brochure on the Warren County Tourism website, www.visitlakegeorge.com. She noted Ms. Curley's contact information would also be featured. She advised of her assistance with an RFP for the New York State Association of Self Insured Counties Annual Conference in 2015. She stated the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge had been selected for the location and 130-150 attendees were anticipated for the Conference. She commented that she provided a concierge display table with Warren County Tourism resource materials for the New York State Board of Election Commissioners Annual Conference which was currently being held at the Georgian Resort with over 200 attendees.

Peter Girard, Creative Director for the Tourism Department, displayed a new program through Ad Workshop called a Capture Unit and he explained this was similar to a standard banner ad but allowed the user to fill out a request for the Warren County Travel Guide to be mailed to them without leaving the existing web page. He advised Mr. Connors would provide the statistics for this new program at the next Committee Meeting. Mr. Girard apprised the Fall Brochure had been printed and due to a printing error in the County's favor, the project was completed on 80 pound paper instead of the 60 pound paper which had originally been ordered; *a copy of the Fall Brochure is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Girard informed of a fishing email blast released on June 4, 2014 to approximately 126,000 subscribers which had been opened by about 11,000 people. The Canadian email blast, he said, was released on June 11, 2014 to approximately 5,000 Canadian email subscribers and was opened by

just under 1,000 people. He noted the Canadian email blast had focused on shopping because research showed that was the primary interest of Canadian visitors. He informed the Fourth of July email blast was released on June 18, 2014 to approximately 127,000 subscribers and was opened by about 11,000 people. Mr. Girard stated an email blast relating to the communities of Warren County and agritourism was released on July 9, 2014 to approximately 128,000 subscribers and had been opened by about 14,000 people.

Mr. Girard displayed the newly purchased Hero3+ waterproof high definition camera by GoPro to the Committee members along with still photos captured from a video shoot with the camera. He noted the cost of the camera had been approximately \$400 and it was capable of shooting limited video footage in 1080 high definition resolution at 60 frames per second. He mentioned the small size of the camera made it convenient for use while capturing video and images throughout the County. He commented he had used the new camera for the World War II B-17 Flying Fortress "Sentimental Journey" Event held at the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport on July 21-27, 2014. He noted he had also taken the new camera miniature golfing for footage to be used in a television commercial. He advised the goal was to supplement the video shoots with the contracted videographer and he noted there was an upcoming video shoot in September. A brief discussion ensued pertaining to the World War II B-17 Flying Fortress "Sentimental Journey" Event.

Mr. Girard displayed images of some of the inter-departmental work which had been completed and noted a banner had been created for the new Human Resources and Civil Service Administration Offices. He advised Paul Dusek, County Administrator, had requested photographs of various County employees and volunteers at work and he displayed some of these images for the Committee members. Mr. Girard listed upcoming Department projects, as follows: the summer video shoot; the fall television campaign; and updates to the Warren County Tourism website.

Mr. Dickinson stated he had received a report pertaining to the questionnaire he had requested to determine the interest in outdoor activities in order to attract a large sporting goods chain, such as Cabela's or Bass Pro Shop. He said he had been pleased with the results and he asked how long the questionnaire would be included on the website. Ms. Johnson replied she believed it would be for a six month period and noted she would present a report at the conclusion of the survey. Mr. Girard advised the questionnaire had been included on the June 4, 2014 fishing email blast. Ms. Johnson pointed out there was also a feature button on the website which led to the questionnaire and Mr. Girard said for the first month the feature button had been placed as one of the top three feature buttons on the home page.

Ms. Curley distributed copies of her June 2014 Monthly Report to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. She informed the Cadillac & LaSalle Club Grand Nationals Event on July 8-12, 2014 had been a huge success. She noted there had been about 800 attendees, 400 of which were registrants. She commented the vehicles in the show were 1910 through 1980 models. She mentioned she had received an email from The Fort William Henry Resort indicating that from their standpoint, the event had been successful. She noted parking had been an issue and if the event returned in the future, it might be necessary to arrange shuttle services. She commented 500 people had attended the dinner and it had been necessary to split the location between two restaurants: Towers Hall and the White Lion Room. She noted the overflow hotels had not done as well as had been anticipated but she was hopeful the event would return in the future.

Ms. Curley informed of her attendance at the New York State Destination Marketing Organization (NYS DMO) Association 2nd Quarter Meeting at Turning Stone Resort & Casino on June 5-6, 2014. She commented this Meeting was for the Directors of Sales from New York State CVB's. As a result

of that meeting, she continued, she had attended the Destination Northeast Conference on June 24-26, 2014 on behalf of "I ♥ NY" and the NYS DMO Association. She noted this Conference was held in Norwalk, Connecticut and involved one-on-one appointments with meeting planners from across the Country. She said all of her appointments had been with meeting planners who planned events and meetings in the Northeast portion of the United States.

Ms. Curley reported she had organized a FAM Tour of specific hotels and attractions for a journalist from *Small Market Meeting Magazine*; however, she continued, it had been necessary for the journalist to cancel due to a medical emergency. She informed another journalist had been assigned and interviews would be conducted via the phone and internet for an article to be run in August.

Ms. Curley said she had met with Sport Nation who were handling the housing for the Special Olympics New York State Fall Games on October 17-18, 2014. She noted the representative from Sport Nation conducted a site tour on June 30th through July 2nd to visit 14 hotels and 2 facilities where the games would be held. She commented the group required 500 hotel rooms which must have interior corridors for safety reasons and had a maximum room rate of \$120 per night. She advised she would continue to work with Sport Nation to assist in finding hotels which met their specific needs. She noted part of the problem was that the hotel rooms were for one night only and most of the area hotels did not want to commit 500 rooms for one night in October and some had a two night minimum. Ms. Curley stated it might be necessary to book some of the rooms in Saratoga County and she pointed out the Special Olympics would use Skidmore College for the equestrian events.

Ms. Curley reported the Shriners Circus would be held at the Festival Space on September 13-14, 2014. She advised she had met with the Shriners and area hoteliers and they have agreed to place posters in their lobbies and sell tickets for the event. Ms. Curley informed she had met with the Lake George Fishing Alliance and the Village of Lake George to plan a King George Fishing Derby in July of 2015. She noted there would be weigh stations in several locations and the events would be held in the Festival Space. She added there would be a small trade show in conjunction with the Fishing Derby. Ms. Curley advised she was working with Cruiser Club USA which was a motorcycle club that was considering an event in the area. She noted this was a family oriented motorcycle club with approximately 100 motorcycles. She informed that Cruiser Club USA would include "motorcycle games" as part of their event.

Mr. Conover opined the King George Fishing Derby had real potential of becoming a successful event. He noted the potential of attracting sportsmen from all over the Country. He commented this would be an opportunity to partner with the sportsmen to protect the waters of Lake George. He stated the Festival for the Lake was a growing event which was held during the shoulder season. A discussion ensued.

Pertaining to the Council of Chambers Report, Ms. Brand commented the June Dinner Meeting had been held at Martucci's Northern Lake George Resort in the Town of Hague. She noted this had been the first meeting since the passing of Mark Martucci. She informed the Council of Chambers awarded an annual scholarship to tourism students at SUNY (State University of New York) Adirondack and it had been unanimously decided to rename the scholarship fund in Mr. Martucci's memory.

Mr. Merlino stated construction of the Festival Space was progressing and he said it would be necessary to assist with the funding for the operation of it. He noted the Tourism and Occupancy Tax Coordination Committees would need to work together to determine the best way to assist. He

commented it would also be necessary to determine if the contract with the CVB for the Special Events Coordinator would be renewed. He added it would be necessary to release an RFP if this was something the County decided to continue. Mr. Kenny advised he would be scheduling an Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee Meeting for the following week and he suggested the meeting be scheduled jointly with the Tourism Committee. Mr. Dickinson suggested that Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, be informed of the meeting and requested to attend.

Fred Austin, of the Fort William Henry Resort, informed of his attendance at the World War II B-17 Flying Fortress "Sentimental Journey" Event where he had spoken with James W. Malone, former Chairman of the Warren County Board of Supervisors (1976-1977). He said he was surprised to learn that Mr. Malone had flown a number of missions during World War II in B-17's. Mr. Austin recounted Mr. Malone's story that his job function had been to hand pump the fuel into the tanks and how he would kick the emptied 55 gallon fuel drums out of the bomber as he continued fueling. Mr. Merlino commented that shows such as the World War II B-17 Flying Fortress "Sentimental Journey" Event were great to attend. He said he had an opportunity to fly in a B-29 in the past and had flown in the front gun turret.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist